



## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 62 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 12 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 7 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 81 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	8	20
K	21	18	39
1	18	19	37
2	21	14	35
3	17	19	36
4	18	16	34
5	13	19	32
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	120	113	233

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 3 % Asian
  - 9 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 73 % White
  - 6 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 10%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	261
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%  
7 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Greek, Spanish, Nuer, Tamil

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28%  
Total number students who qualify: 66

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %  
52 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>9</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>14</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

True to its mission, the Columbian Elementary School staff provides the best possible learning environment for each child, every day. Columbian Elementary...a once in a lifetime learning experience...every day! Make it COUNT! C... Community Partnerships O... Optimizing Student Achievement U... Understanding Citizenship N... Nurturing Leaders of Tomorrow T... Tradition of Excellence Cobras COUNT!

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The Columbian Elementary School mission serves as the foundation for providing educational opportunities that will foster the acquisition of academic, physical, and life skills necessary for each Columbian student to reach his or her highest potential.

The original Columbian Elementary School, located at 38th and Jones Street, was named in honor of Christopher Columbus because the school opened in 1892, 400 years after his first voyage. When the original Columbian closed, the community requested its name be given to a new school. The westward expansion of the city of Omaha created the need for a new elementary school, and in September of 1970, the new Columbian Elementary School opened its doors for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Columbian Elementary School, home of the Cobras, has an enrollment of approximately 250 students in grades pre-K through fifth grade. Our school colors are purple and gold. Resource special education support, Speech Language Therapy, Gifted and Talented Education, English Language Learners, and the services of our school counselor are some of the programs that supplement and support the general education classroom. Our pre-K program is an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program for students age 3-5, which is one of 14 in the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) district.

The cooperative partnerships of teachers, parents, families, and community members have produced student and financial resources that support the academic and social endeavors of Columbian Elementary School. The success of Columbian students is due in large part to the quality of relationships among adults at the school and these partnerships. Teachers and support staff are joined in the shared vision of providing the best possible educational setting for each child. As stated in our mission, a once in a lifetime learning experience is provided every day. Talented, skilled and committed teachers believe in the potential of their students. It is recognized that individual students have individual needs. The school leadership philosophy is based on the principle that all students can achieve when high expectations are expected, and the integrity of each school day is protected. Support is provided not only in academic areas but also in the social emotional areas. Parents, community volunteers and mentors play an important role in supporting the learning and activities of the school as well. Columbian Elementary School has a highly involved parent-teacher organization (PTO) that includes an executive board, committee chairmen and general membership. The PTO has developed and sponsored several before, during, and after-school opportunities to support student success and family involvement. They are committed to nurturing our leaders of tomorrow.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Columbian prepares all students for success through high-quality, equitable English Language Arts (ELA) teaching and learning. Columbian is committed to cultivating responsible, self-motivated learners through direct instruction of strong literacy skills and strategies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The use of the gradual release in ELA ensures that all students have a concrete model of expected learning and allows teachers to check for understanding so they can adjust their instruction and reteach as needed. OPS believes in a balanced approach to literacy. All children receive phonics, whole and small group reading, and writing each day. Small group differentiated reading provides students time to process text at their instructional level with descriptive feedback provided by the classroom teacher. Time allotments allow for a minimum of 150 instructional ELA minutes each day which includes time for a reading intervention. Classroom teachers in grades K-3 deliver a daily targeted intervention to students not meeting mastery. In addition, students who have a special education IEP receive additional inclusive support each day. English Learners and Gifted also receive additional support inside and outside of the classroom. The Nebraska 2014 ELA College and Career Ready Standards are aligned to the core resources (Journeys K-2 and Storytown 3-5). In addition to the writing that occurs during the reading block students receive 45-50 minutes of a structured Writer's Workshop. During this time teachers can meet the needs of all children by having individual writing conferences. At Columbian all teachers follow this framework and follow the OPS course guides to ensure all children receive an equitable experience.

Formative, summative, and district assessments are given in the area of ELA for all grade levels. Formative assessments include anecdotal notes, teacher observation, running records with a common comprehension scoring guide and rubric, and weekly comprehension tests. Summative theme/unit assessments are given for each theme/unit. All students in grades K-5 are given the district wide ELA MAP Growth assessment 3 times a year, fall, winter and spring. MAP Growth is an adaptive assessment experience that accurately measures each student's performance and growth. Timely reports deliver essential information that can be used to improve both teaching and learning. Students in grades 3-5 also take the state of Nebraska assessment, Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) in ELA. All assessment data is analyzed by the Columbian staff to inform and plan instruction and to communicate student progress to parents.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

In the Omaha Public Schools and at Columbian Elementary, all teachers engage students with high quality math instruction. Students persevere and thrive in student centered classrooms where critical thinking and reasoning, collaboration, math discourse, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and authentic problem solving are expected. Students believe in themselves as mathematicians and will leave Columbian as empowered, mathematically literate citizens. Math lessons are delivered through the gradual release of instruction using best practices for mathematical instruction which include use of concrete, pictorial and abstract representations, opportunities for productive struggle, and math talk. Time allotments for math allow for 75-85 minutes of daily instruction. This time also allows classroom teachers to meet with small group(s) of students to reteach, differentiate, and/or accelerate learning opportunities. Special Education, English Language, and Gifted students receive additional support during math. The Nebraska 2015 Math College and Career Ready Standards are aligned to the core resource, GO Math!. The standards and curriculum present a progressive learning continuum which includes number sense, algebra, geometry, and data.

Formative, summative, and district assessments are given in the area of math for all grade levels. Formative assessments include anecdotal notes, teacher observation, checks for understanding and mid-chapter checkpoints. Common summative assessments are administered for each chapter to all students throughout the Omaha Public School district. All students in grades K-5 are given the district wide math MAP Growth

assessment 3 times a year, fall, winter and spring. MAP Growth is an adaptive assessment experience that accurately measures each student's performance and growth. Timely reports deliver essential information that can be used to improve both teaching and learning. Students in grades 3-5 also take the state of Nebraska assessment, Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) in math. All assessment data is analyzed by the Columbian staff to inform and plan instruction and to communicate student progress to parents.

### **1c. Science:**

In the Omaha Public Schools and Columbian, we believe scientific inquiry is an approach to learning that involves a process of exploring the natural or material world, that leads to asking questions and making discoveries in the search for new understandings. The inquiry process is driven by one's own curiosity, wonder, interest, or passion to understand an observation or solve a problem. During Science instruction we use the philosophy that students should be engaged with hands on science. Science and engineering practices are assessed together, to show students not only “know” science concepts; but also, can investigate the natural world. Science lessons are taught using inquiry and the gradual release of instruction and embed cross-curricular literacy and mathematical concepts. Teachers and students are working on lessons that are three dimensional. Time allotments allow for 30 – 45 minutes of science instruction following the district curriculum guides. Our new standards are based on A Framework for K-12 Science Education. The framework is designed to help realize a vision for education in the sciences and engineering in which students, over multiple years of school, actively engage in Science and Engineering Practices and apply Crosscutting Concepts to deepen their understanding of the Disciplinary Core Ideas in these fields.

Formative, summative, and district assessments are given in the area of science for all grade levels. Teachers are responsible for completing 1 common summative for every 3-5 formative assessment. Formative assessments include anecdotal notes, teacher observation, checks for understanding, uConnect Labs, u Investigate Labs, Quest Connections and lesson quick check-ins. Each grade level gives 3 required summative assessments in the area of science per quarter. All students in grades 3-5 are given the district wide science MAP Growth assessment 3 times a year, fall, winter and spring. MAP Growth is an adaptive assessment experience that accurately measures each student's performance and growth. Timely reports deliver essential information that can be used to improve both teaching and learning. Students in grade 5 also take the state of Nebraska assessment, Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) in math. All assessment data is analyzed by the Columbian staff to inform and plan instruction and to communicate student progress to parents.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Columbian students experience an ever-widening spiral in the social studies curriculum. The focus starts on self and family, and progresses to the neighborhood, the community (Omaha), the state (Nebraska), and country (United States). Specifically, the focuses at each grade level K-5 are as follows: kindergarten, Me/Myself, first grade, My family/Families, second grade, Neighborhoods, third grade Community/specific study of Omaha History, fourth grade, States/Regions/Nebraska History, and fifth grade, US History/Building our Nation. Through this progression, students begin to see their place as productive citizens of the United States, demonstrate knowledge and skills needed for life-long learning, and informed decision making. As with the other core curricular areas, social studies also uses the gradual release of instruction to ensure that all students have a concrete model of expected learning and allows teachers to check for understanding so they can adjust their instruction and reteach as needed.

Formative, summative, and district assessments are given in the area of social studies for all grade levels. Formative assessments include anecdotal notes, teacher observation, checks for understanding and mid-chapter check-points. Summative assessments are administered for each chapter to all students throughout the Omaha Public School district. In addition to the chapter assessments, students in all grades do social studies and Big 6 inquiry projects in collaboration with Library and Technology.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

## **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

Columbian has a morning and afternoon Early Childhood Special Education classroom that currently serves up to 18 preschool age students in each class with developmental delays. This classroom is a unique program designed to meet the needs of children developing slower than their same-age peers. The goal of this program is to provide language-rich social opportunities for children to help prepare them for kindergarten and have positive experiences in school as they grow. The district currently has 14 classrooms like this one, that serve 360 students.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All Columbian students have daily opportunities to participate in other curriculum areas including Art, Physical Education, Music, Library and, Technology. Students have each other curriculum area once a week for 50 minutes. Art education is based on carefully planned and sequenced learning goals that follow the Art content standards. At Columbian, during physical education, we provide students with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities with meaningful content and instruction. All students are provided opportunities to develop health-related fitness, physical competence, cognitive understanding, and positive attitudes about physical activity that promote a healthy and physically active lifestyle. Students in fourth and fifth grade receive instruction in Human Growth and Development as well.

Music education is structured to help students achieve aesthetic sensitivity and response through heightened awareness and understanding of the musical experience. Columbian students develop musical skills and techniques which enable them to be lifelong participants and consumers of music. Our Library curriculum includes instruction in library skills, Common Sense Media and inquiry using the Big 6 +Inquiry framework along with technology integration supporting multiple literacies. The sequence includes collaborative inquiry projects tied directly to the English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum. The curriculum is intended to prepare learners to engage with relevant information in all formats: to inquire, think critically and gain knowledge, pursue personal reading and information interests, draw conclusions and make informed decision, and share knowledge and participate ethically and productively.

## **3. Special Populations:**

Differentiated instruction is a key component of the success at Columbian Elementary School.

Differentiation takes place in every classroom for all learners. The following key principles are in place and form the foundation of differentiating instruction: ongoing formative assessment, recognition of diverse learners, problem solving, choice, and collaboration. At Columbian, we meet the needs of below grade level readers in all grade levels, students with disabilities, and English language learners with a commitment to using Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) with fidelity. This intervention is a powerful, short-term intervention, that provides daily, intensive, small group instruction, which supplements the classroom balanced literacy approach. LLI turns struggling readers into successful readers with engaging leveled books and fast-paced, systematically designed lessons that focus on phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills. This intervention is done every day, three students to a group for 30 minutes. Teachers collaborate and have a universal intervention time to share students and meet the needs of students at the same reading level across grade levels. A key component of LLI is the leveled take home book for parents to read with their child. Columbian parents embrace this practice and see the growth at home as well. Non-certified staff share in supporting students with additional reading of these take home books at school to ensure students are provided extra practice to read, discuss, and revisit the text. Teachers consistently observe and note reading behaviors to plan for future instruction and collaborate with each other. Columbian has had great success with moving students to grade level proficiency and above with this daily intervention.

Differentiation is also provided for students who are above grade level and students in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Identified students in grades 3-5 receive differentiated above grade level instruction from our GATE teacher weekly in all content areas. Teacher input, along with data provided by the OPS Research Division regarding the student 2nd grade InView assessment scores and MAP Growth assessment, determine GATE identification. Columbian 4th and 5th grade GATE students had

the opportunity to participate in an interactive math opportunity called BOING last year. BOING has continued for our current 4th graders this school year. BOING is a blended learning option that provides enrichment using engaging themes in an online format using OneNote Classroom Notebook, Khan Academy, Prodigy, SeeSaw, and Office 365. On top of weekly GATE instruction, other district GATE teachers provide quarterly Columbian visits, weekly online instruction, and one field trip per semester for our students. Goals for students include providing highly engaging opportunities that will support grade level math standards as well as real world learning experiences that align with 21st century skills. For example, the first quarter focus was to develop students' geometry knowledge via the multi-disciplinary theme of bridge building. To allow students to master the BOING objectives, the teachers have aligned individualized instruction and practice to courses in Khan Academy. Students can complete these online activities at home and/or at school. Students and their families receive feedback and grades through progress reports.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The school culture at Columbian Elementary School is so positive that you can feel it as soon as you enter the building. It is evident in the staff and students, every classroom you visit, on the walls, and in the air. Every hallway smile and “hello” that staff and students receive sinks in and builds up our self-efficacy and sense of belonging. Columbian staff, students, parents, and family members feel safe, valued, cared for, engaged, and respected because of our intentionally inviting environment. This allows for learning to increase and staff satisfaction and retention to be enhanced. We cultivate our school climate and culture daily by living our mission and making it visible, embracing social-emotional learning for teachers and students, fostering resilience, communicating well and often, recognizing the awesomeness in our staff and students. We recognize that every positive word and action matters. The Columbian mission is revisited and reflected upon often to ensure the school and its members are genuinely living the mission. This is done through our morning announcements, school pledge, newsletters, email signatures, website, and social media. The principal also has a daily announcement for staff to communicate clearly, openly and with transparency to create a collaborative, powerful and strong culture to move teaching and learning forward. Both forms of announcements foster resilience with a can-do attitude and growth mindset.

Positive behavior interventions and supports are in place at Columbian to encourage good behavior with a focus on prevention rather than punishment through our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support of Behavior (MTSS-B) approach. This improves our school culture and the behavioral climate of classrooms, which ultimately leads to enhanced academic performance. Our MTSS-B/School Culture committee has daily, weekly and monthly positive behavior and academic success incentives for students which include: Cobra Cash, Cobra Coins, Cobras to Count On and 4B (positive principal calls) that are celebrated and communicated through parent phone calls, the newsletter, pictures throughout the building and through our website and social media. Universal behavior matrixes and lesson plans on expected behavior and routines and procedures have been created for all staff to teach and implement in all areas of the building. Not only do we highlight students to recognize their awesomeness, but we highlight staff weekly through our 30 Ways to Say Yay incentive and through the principal's daily announcements.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community engagement is a two-way street here at Columbian. The staff, families, and community actively work together to create a network of shared responsibility for student success. The staff engage families through multiple modes of communication. Even before the first day of school, parents receive information about school performance, curriculum expectations, and standards at Back to School/Curriculum Night. Mid-term reports and report cards are sent home a total of eight times during the school year. Parents receive information about their child’s performance at report card conferences twice a year and, if necessary, at additional scheduled meetings. Individual student growth goals for every child are also shared and discussed at parent teacher conferences. These goals are developed from student assessment data. For students who are experiencing difficulty with grade level standards or expectations, additional meetings are held to keep parents current on their child’s progress. Weekly Friday folders are sent home with samples of student work, important announcements and school news. A small percentage of students benefit from daily reporting to parents through a school to home notebook or behavior modification plan.

Columbian Elementary parent-teacher organization (PTO) funds and engages families and the community through many school activities and programs. The PTO executive board and general members meet regularly throughout the school year in the evening. Evening family events provide a time for parents and teachers to enjoy learning with their children. Yearly events include support with Back to School/Curriculum Night, Open House, Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics Fair, Pancake Man, School Carnival and Book Fair. The PTO also supports programs during the school day such as providing funding for school field trip transportation and fees, Fun and Fitness Day, Fun Run, Career Day, holiday classroom parties, safety patrol incentives and parties, kindergarten gingerbread houses and

5th grade Dancing Classrooms through Arts in Motion. The funding provided by our Columbian PTO provides our students with opportunities outside of district funded programming. In fact, one-third of our 5th graders chose to extend their Dancing Classroom experience by attending continued instruction on Saturdays provided by Arts in Motion, the organization providing Dancing Classrooms in public schools. These opportunities through our family and community partnerships enrich our OPS guaranteed and viable curriculum beyond the classroom setting.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Collective teacher efficacy refers to a staff's shared belief that through their collective action, they can positively influence student outcomes, including those who are disengaged and/or disadvantaged. When efficacy is high, teachers show greater persistence and are more likely to try new teaching approaches. Professional development at Columbian puts collective teacher efficacy as the foundation and provides staff with active learning opportunities, feedback, and support built right in to implement and sustain new initiatives, best practices and instructional strategies with teams working together. Professional development is determined from analyzing student data, feedback from the staff and current district initiatives and instructional best practices. The school improvement plan is developed with input from teachers who help create the goals and action steps, which then guide our professional development. The goals are then communicated to all stakeholders at Columbian. Each school improvement goal is led by a staff committee chairman and committee with both certified and non-certified team members. We have a school improvement Literacy Team, Math/Science/Technology Team, MTSS-B/School Culture Team and Wellness Team. Our professional development is delivered through staff meetings, grade level meetings, coaching, principal evaluations and conferencing, peer observations, and instructional rounds. Grade level meetings by content area occur monthly. Grade level teams and the principal focus on a specific content area and cover the following agenda items: A+ curriculum guides, learning goals, pacing, lesson plans, student work and assessments, MAP data, and learning continuum reports. Instructional rounds have also been another successful approach to professional development. Teams of staff go into classrooms to observe and learn from their peers. The rounds are followed by the team coming together to have instructional conversations directly on the teaching, learning, and student work. Professional development is also delivered through district curriculum days, workshops and trainings. Columbian has dedicated themselves to full implementation of school improvement goals before moving on to new goals. Professional development in the last few years has included the guaranteed and viable curriculum, Visible Learning, guided reading, Leveled Literacy Intervention, writing instruction, clear learning goals, MTSS-B, math (growth mindset, productive struggle, math discourse, concrete-pictorial-abstract model and math talk) and scientific inquiry.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The Columbian Elementary School principal has a visible leadership style and instructional philosophy that guides all decision making to ensure student success. She sets the following instructional beliefs as the foundation for teaching and learning at Columbian. She believes her number one job is being an instructional leader with student success as her priority. She also believes that a principal's job is to support teachers in the classroom because a teacher's job is to support students. A growth mindset is a part of the Columbian culture and the principal lives and breathes this daily with her positivity and high energy. Standard based instruction is an expectation using our guaranteed and viable curriculum with focus on proven instructional strategies. This is the foundation for high quality, engaging instruction, which is critical in raising achievement. High expectations, kindness, and rigorous learning goals are also an expectation of the principal. She communicates that routines and procedures are foundational for success. The principal protects bell to bell instruction with every day being a fresh start for students. She knows that the relationships we create are critical to our success. It's all about building true and authentic relationships at Columbian. The principal does embrace the "work hard, play hard" philosophy that promotes a healthy balance of work and home and putting staff member's own families first. Her open-door policy puts communication and respect at the forefront for staff, students and families. She is a problem solver in her office, the lunchroom, and classroom. You will often find the principal having goal meetings with students and problem solving in all areas of the building. She is a true role model and leads by example by being highly visible every day.

The principal's instructional beliefs are demonstrated and unified by our well-functioning Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ILT is comprised of our school improvement plan committee chairmen. This team meets regularly throughout the year to ensure the mission and instructional beliefs are visible, alive and well. All staff are always welcome to attend the ILT meetings. The principal realizes she cannot lead Columbian to make breakthrough achievement gains on her own; the support of an aligned instructional leadership team is crucial. All staff are responsible for implementing school-wide initiatives for instruction, and they also model instructional beliefs set by the principal. So, it's imperative that the members of the leadership team share the principal's vision and mission for the school to create a once in a lifetime learning experience every day.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Columbian Elementary students have a deep love of reading. In fact, our current building has the library as the heart of the building. We are in the process of building a new Columbian Elementary School on the current site which will open in August of 2019. During the educational specification process all stakeholders (staff, parents, students and community members) had input on the design. The principal and architect visited every classroom to get the students input. Overwhelmingly, the students said, “We want more books! We want the library to be the heart of the new building, too, equipped with a reading and learning tree.” That is exactly how the building was designed and is currently being built to represent our deep love of reading! So, it makes sense that the single practice the stakeholders believe has been the most influential in Columbian Elementary School’s success is our Balanced Literacy Model approach to reading instruction in grades k-5 based on state standards and the guaranteed and viable OPS curriculum. We believe in a balanced approach to literacy instruction where all students are assisted to reach their highest potential by actively engaging in authentic reading and writing experiences. Our staff provides bell to bell, high quality instruction that is grounded in research based best practices. Direct and explicit reading instruction is delivered daily that contains all components of literacy: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, word study and writing; and differentiated guided reading instruction to meet the needs of each child based upon ongoing monitoring and assessment. These literacy strategies are applied across all content areas. Our students apply skills and strategies to become active, purposeful, thoughtful, and competent readers, writers, listeners, and speakers. They demonstrate high levels of understanding, effective communication skills, and independence as problem solvers. Columbian Cobras are prepared to participate as literate, contributing members in a global society with foundational skills and strategies in reading, writing, problem solving, listening, and speaking that ensures all students perform at National Blue Ribbon School levels of excellence.